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To investigate the leader behavior characteristics of elementary school principals and to examine these characteristics as they relate to organizational climate, 35 randomly selected southern California schools with approximately 715 teachers and principals were studied. The data on organizational climate were collected by means of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) by Halpin and Croft, and on the leader behavior characteristics by means of the Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B) by Schutz, Orientation Inventory (ORI) by Buss, and the Survey on Interpersonal Values (SIV) by Gordon. When little support was found for the original hypothesis, that there exists a significant relationship between leader behavior characteristics of elementary principals and the organizational climates of their schools, the data were reanalyzed in search of plausible explanations. That the original analyses measured teacher perception of organizational climate as compared to principal perception of leader behavior characteristics constituted one plausible explanation. The findings clearly indicated the presence of a compelling organizational climate stability even when principals were replaced. (HW)

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LEADER BEHAVIOR CHARACTERISTICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE*

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It was the purpose of this study to investigate leader behavior characteristics of elementary school principals and examine these characteristics as they relate to organizational climate. The initial interest was the conceptualization of leader behavior and organizational climate, which was accomplished by means of a theoretical formulation from social systems theory. Specifically, Getzels' model of social behavior[1] provided the justification for (1) viewing the leader's behavior characteristically as the result of the interaction between the expectations of his role and his need-dispositions or more explicitly and operationally his values and orientations,[2] and (2) conceptualizing organizational climate as "the interaction between the task-achievement and the needs-satisfaction dimensions within the organization"[3] which

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*this paper is based upon the unpublished, copyrighted Ph.D. dissertation of the author at Claremont Graduate School available through University Microfilms.

[1]J. W. Getzels, "Administration as a Social Process," in A. W. Halpin, ed., Administrative Theory in Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 150-165.

[2]T. Parsons and E. A. Shils, Toward A General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 59 and 114.

[3]R. C. Lonsdale, "Maintaining the Organization in Dynamic Equilibrium," in D. Griffiths, ed., Behavioral Science and Educational Administration, 63rd Yearbook of the NSSE, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 166.

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for the purposes of this investigation will be operationalized to refer to the resulting condition within an elementary school from the interaction between the teachers and the principal.

The general hypothesis of the study was that there exists a significant relationship between leader behavior characteristics of elementary principals and the organizational climates of the schools within which they serve. Specifically, leader behavior characteristics were defined as interpersonal orientation, organizational orientation, and interpersonal values. Organizational climate was defined as the characteristics of teacher-principal interaction. Ancillary hypotheses dealt with (1) the effect of the replacement of a principal upon the organizational climate, and (2) the effect of the length of a principal's incumbency in a school upon his leader behavior and perceptions of the organizational climate.

The design of the study included the collection of data on the organizational climate by means of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) as developed by Halpin and Croft[4] and leader behavior characteristics by means of the Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation - Behavior (FIRO-B)[5] questionnaire as developed by William Schutz, Orientation Inventory (ORI)[6] as developed by Bernard Bass, and the

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[4]A. W. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 148.

[5]W. C. Schutz, FIRO-B (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1967).

[6]B. M. Bass, The Orientation Inventory (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1962).

Survey on Interpersonal Values (SIV)[7] by L. V. Gordon. The unit of analysis was the school. The sample consisted of thirty-five randomly selected schools (approximately 715 teachers and principals) in one large urban school district in Southern California. Statistical analysis of the basic hypotheses was accomplished by means of canonical correlation analysis which enabled the investigator to probe deeply into the relationships between the sets of multiple variables under consideration. Trend analysis utilizing the "t"- test of significance was used to test the hypothesis which stated that if a principal is replaced there will be no significant accompanying change in the organizational climate of the school.

Generally, leader behavior and organizational climate were not shown to be significantly related (p's > .10). However, a significant relationship (one significant canonical function -- $\chi^2 = 63.90$, df = 48, p = .06, canonical r = .80) was found between the interpersonal orientation (FIRO-B) of the principal and the organizational climate (OCDQ). Principals exhibited a consistent similarity in their leader behavior characteristics on the basis of the fifteen variables measured by the FIRO-B, ORI, and SIV. They were found to be highly task-oriented, kindly and considerate of subordinates, needing direction and support of superordinates but desirous of independence to use the direction and support to arrive at their own decisions. Stability of the organizational climate was suggested by the overwhelming support for the hypothesis dealing with principal replacement and the investigation of five specific plausible explanations (all "t" ratios

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[7] L. V. Gordon, The Survey of Interpersonal Values (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1960).

indicated the probability of no difference). A retest after a period of approximately eight months in thirteen of the schools showed the replacement of the principal to have no significant effect upon the existing organizational climate ("t" ratios indicated the probability of no difference). The length of the principal's incumbency was introduced as an additional variable and was shown to be (1) related to the congruence of his leader behavior and organizational climate (all canonical r's increased), but (2) not related to the congruence of the teacher-principal perceptions of their organizational climate.

The general lack of support for the basic hypothesis was a surprise in view of what was thought to be a rather convincing theoretical framework for the study. The data were reanalyzed under various conditions in search for evidence of plausible explanations. For example, the canonical correlation analyses remained unchanged when rerun minus the suspected contaminating influence of the principal's OCDQ scores. However, the research of Watkins,[8] Boisen,[9] and Hinson[10] as well as the comparisons by means of canonical correlation analysis of teacher-principal perceptions of organizational climate reported in this study indicate that teachers and principals perceive their climate differently. The data were rerun again,

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[8]J. F. Watkins, The Relationships Between the Principal and His Professional Staff, Cooperative Research Project, U. S. Office of Education, 1966.

[9]A. G. Boisen, Relationships Among the Perceptions and Expectations Held by Principals and Teachers for the Organizational Climate of Elementary Schools (unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, 1966).

[10]J. H. Hinson, An Investigation of the Organizational Climate of the Elementary Schools in a Large Urban School System (unpublished dissertation, University of Georgia, 1965).

this time comparing principal's perception (minus the teacher's perceptions) of the climate with his perception of his leader behavior characteristics. In this case the significance of the relationship was increased (all canonical r's increased). It was clear that the original analyses which were predominantly measurements of teacher perceptions of organizational climate as compared to principal perceptions of leader behavior characteristics constituted at least one plausible explanation for the lack of support for the hypotheses.

The findings of the investigation clearly indicate the presence of a compelling organizational climate stability. Climates did not change when principals were replaced. The principal's leader behavior became more significantly related to the organizational climate as the length of his incumbency increased. There was pervasive support in this study for the assumption that school functionaries are socialized if not subsumed by their organizations. Recall that all of the principals in this study exhibited incredibly consistent similarities on the fifteen leader behavior variables measured. These similarities were much like those discovered by Halpin and Croft in a study of the biographical characteristics of elementary principals.[11] Moreover, apparently the socialization in the case of the principals in this sample extends beyond the immediate school site itself. Apparently large urban schools districts and the educational establishment itself carefully prepare principals to behave in a rational, predictable, and uniform manner. It would be hard to deny that this is

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[11]A. W. Halpin and D. B. Croft, The Biographical Characteristics of Elementary School Principals, U. S. Office of Education, Contract #214 (6905), 1960.

an effective means of maximizing the latitude of utilization among administrative functionaries in a large urban school district where problems of growth prevail.

Although this investigator believes that the methodological issues mentioned above constitute the sources of the major "leaks" in the research, the implications that the findings bear upon the theoretical framework of the study cannot be overlooked. Generally, the data showed no significant relationship between leader behavior characteristics and organizational climate. Theoretically, this justifies a re-examination of the construct from which this investigator assumed that the principal contributes to and is influenced by the school within which he is engaged. In so doing one is struck with the assumption that what the principal contributes in the way of his leader behavior characteristics is to the subsystem (the school) while the inputs which influence these characteristics and the contribution of his rewards are generated by the system (the school district). If the theory is tenable then in large urban areas apparently the school district and not the school is the institution (system) which contributes to and is influenced by the principal. This is suggested by the data to the extent that the leader behavior characteristics of the principals in the sample were incredibly similar. Yet, to what extent is the organizational climate of the school (subsystem) influenced by the organizational climate of the district (system)? The data show variation in the organizational climate of the schools ranging from "open" to "closed." In the case of large urban areas the hypotheses need to be retested establishing school districts as the institutions (systems) to which to compare the leader behavior characteristics of principals. However, hints of

doubt are hereby registered regarding the theoretical considerations upon which this study is based. The need for more empirical testing is obvious which hopefully will continue to raise the issues of the efficacy of our theories.

Further implications for research include a more precise consideration of the construct validity of the instruments used, collection and analysis of data to compare teacher perceptions of the domains of interest exclusive of the principal, an investigation into the possible etiology of evidenced climate stability and leader behavior uniformity, and further development of canonical correlation analysis with particular emphasis upon normalization and tests of significance for the coefficients.